

GED® Testing Information

The Tests of General Educational Development (GED® Tests) were developed for returning World War II veterans in the 1940s to measure educational achievement equivalent to high school graduates. The Tests have been widely used for adults without a high school diploma since the 1950s. Over 17 million individuals have earned the GED credential. Regardless of the reason the adult did not complete high school, this second opportunity enables adults to get a job, obtain a better job or transition to postsecondary education. The GED credential is accepted in lieu of a traditional high school diploma by 98 percent of postsecondary institutions universities and 96 percent of employers.

The GED Testing Service (GEDTS™) of the American Council on Education makes these Tests available. Each year, approximately 700,000 people take the GED Tests nationwide. About one in seven high school diplomas issued in the United States each year are based on passing the GED Tests.

The GED Tests provide a uniform measure of high school achievement. Passing the Tests means the same in every state from Maine to California, the Canadian provinces and U.S. territories. The GED Tests are standardized and normalized using a nationally representative sample of graduating seniors during the spring of the senior year. The Tests are designed so those who pass the GED Tests meet or exceed the performance of that demonstrated by four out of every ten traditional high school graduates. In other words, forty percent of current high school graduates would not pass the GED Tests. The tests are updated to coincide with curricular and technological changes in secondary schools as well as employer needs for skilled workers. The latest version of the GED Tests was released in 2002 and a Fifth Edition is expected in 2012.

There are five content areas on the GED Tests: Language Arts, Writing; Social Studies; Science; Math; Language Arts, Reading. It takes approximately eight and one-half hours to administer the Tests with beginning directions for each test and breaks between Tests. The Language Arts, Writing test has a multiple choice section over mechanics and usage followed by an essay written on a specific topic. The Math test has two parts with a calculator used on the first part, but not the second part. Test-takers must obtain at least a 410 score on each of the content areas with an overall average of 450. Test-takers with scores above 610 would rank in the top ten percent of a high school class.

Test security, test center policies, test administration rules are governed by GEDTS Policies and Procedures. The test centers receive no state or federal funding and must operate from the test fees. The average fee nationwide is \$62 with the fee in Kentucky set at \$50.

Kentucky has issued over 400,000 GED credentials since inception of the program in the 1940s. In earlier years of the program, Kentucky issued an average of over 11,000 credentials a year. Since 2002 and the census decline in K-12 enrollments, Kentucky has issued an average of 9,500 credentials a year. The average age of test-takers nationally and in Kentucky is 25 years.

Kentucky has forty public access test centers with testing provided at 80 testing sites in 74 counties and testing at 48 jails, 16 prisons, 9 Department of Juvenile Justice facilities and 7 Job Corps.

Kentucky is one of eleven states that have applied to GEDTS to offer the Option Program, a niche program for intervention with potential dropouts. This GED secondary program allows currently enrolled secondary students that meet the eligibility to pursue the GED credential. Students must be two years behind their cohort, have earned four credits toward graduation and demonstrate academic capability. Twenty-four school districts will offer the program this academic year.